



*Evangelina Bossard y Comen*

# THE TOPIC OF THE MONTH.

## A ROMANCE OF THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES.

### A CUBAN HEROINE AND HER RESCUER.

**F**EW things that happened last month are more worthy of chronicling than the brilliantly successful achievement of Karl Decker in rescuing the Cuban heroine, Miss Evangelina Cisneros, from the State prison of Havana.

#### I.—THE JOURNALISM THAT ACTS.

Apart altogether from the interest which belongs to it as an episode which recalls the daring enterprises of the adventurers of the Middle Ages, the incident marks a significant phase in the evolution of the journalistic profession. Newspaper reporters have had many assignments of various kinds, but since Stanley was commissioned to go and find Livingstone, who was lost in the centre of the Dark Continent, there has been nothing quite so sensational as the commission which Mr. Hearst of the *New York Journal* gave to Mr. Karl Decker to go and rescue Evangelina Cisneros from the Spanish prison in which she had been confined for many months. Stanley's commission after all was one of exploration, and came easily within what had always been regarded as a legitimate field of journalistic enterprise; but a commission to break into a gaol, and carry off a captive who was under arrest by the orders of the Government of a city with which the Americans were at peace, marks a development fraught with many possibilities, some of which are by no means calculated to minister to the repose of nations.

On the whole, I am disposed to regard the chief importance of the story as lying in the magnificent advertise-

ment which it has afforded the *New York Journal* and its spirited proprietor, Mr. W. R. Hearst. I say this in no spirit of sarcasm. There are great possibilities latent in that young man, and nothing is more important than to

take note sometimes of a personality which may be a decisive factor in the determining of many great issues, both internal and international. Whether this is so or not, depends upon a factor upon which we have as yet no trustworthy data to pronounce judgment.

What is visible to all men is that a young man of enormous energy and great journalistic instinct has dedicated a fortune as great as that of Monte Christo to the creation of a newspaper which, instead of confining itself to the function of chronicling other men's deeds, boldly asserts its determination to supersede the journalism that chronicles by

the journalism that acts. Other newspapers may write about things. The *Journal* is determined to do them. It has been doing a good many things—some of them extremely well, others not so well. I cannot for a moment profess to feel any unqualified admiration for many of the manifestations of the exuberant vitality of this phenomenal editor. But that is neither here nor there. The important fact is that here is a man with one great newspaper in San Francisco and another greater newspaper in New York, who only failed by a mere fluke from having another great newspaper in Chicago; who has ample means to give effect to the most extravagant journalistic ambitions; who is in the very prime of man-



W. R. HEARST.

Editor and Proprietor of the *New York Journal*.

hood, and who, so far, is entirely untrammelled by any allegiance to any party or sect or faction in the world.

In his ambition to be a journalist who does things, the release of Evangelina Cisneros may be counted as his first great international success. It deserves due recognition as a hint foreshadowing what this newest of new journalists may feel compelled to do hereafter. I am naturally a very sympathetic observer of this evolution. What Mr. Hearst is doing reminds me at every turn of what we tried to do in the old *Pall Mall* days, when our ambitions were quite as vast, but our means, alas! were much more limited. I was no multi-millionaire like Mr. Hearst, neither did I bstride a continent like a colossus, with one foot on the Pacific and the other on the Atlantic. But I realised, and in some fashion succeeded in impressing upon the public mind, a conception of what Matthew Arnold called "The New Journalism" which has never been entirely effaced—not even by the gross and unworthy caricatures of some new journalists of these latter days. Having said so much by way of preamble, I will now proceed to tell as briefly as possible the story of this new Evangeline.

## II.—THE FAIR CAPTIVE.

Evangelina Cisneros is a young and beautiful girl, of Spanish descent, of Cuban birth, whose father took part in the attempt made by the Cuban patriots to throw off the Spanish yoke, and whose uncle was at one time President of the nascent Republic of Cuba. Like many another revolutionist he fell into the hands of the Government he was trying to upset, and by them was promptly consigned to gaol. There he remained for some time, suffering the usual indignities meted out to captive revolutionists by this Spanish Government. His daughter, full of distress at the sufferings of her father, and fear that the rigours of the confinement from which he was suffering might endanger his life, made her way to the officer, Colonel Berriz, and implored him to consent to her father's release. It has been the fate of Spain at crises in her destiny to have the course of her fate decided by the lawless passions of her rulers. One of the most familiar stories in European history tells how the Moors were brought into Spain as the result of Don Roderick's lawless passion for the daughter of Count Julian, and it will not be at all surprising if, at the close of the nineteenth century, the Pearl of the Antilles should be wrenched from the heirs of Ferdinand and Isabella because her representative in Cuba cast wanton eyes upon a girl as beautiful but more fortunate than Don Roderick's mistress. Berriz was a soldier and a Spaniard. He was dealing with the daughter of a rebel, and he made to her one of those proposals which tradition associates with the worst period of English history, when the bloody assizes followed in the wake of Monmouth's rebellion.

Miss Cisneros wrote her own story of her life in her own simple language after her rescue. It appeared—in translation of course—in the *Sunday Journal* of October 17. She begins:—

It is not good that the people say I am a girl. I am not a girl; I am a woman. I am nineteen years old.

Her mother died before she can remember, and from childhood she kept house for her father. One day her father came home from the sugar plantation, and sat a long time at the table and did not speak—

All in a moment he pushed away his plate, jumped up from the table, and he took me by the shoulder, he looked me

straight in the eyes, and he said, "My little girl, I am going to fight for Cuba." And then I cried, and I think he cried a little too, and I kissed him and told him that I was glad. I said, "Father, I will go with you." Well, I went with him.

"I saw many things," she says, "that make me feel sick now when I dream of them at night. Once I sat half the night by a wounded man who prayed me to kill him, and I could not kill him, and I must wait for daylight, and when the sun rose he died alone while I was gone to get him a drink of water." Her father was betrayed by a spy and taken prisoner. He was very ill when confined in the Cabanas, and after much petitioning on her part General Campos removed him to the Isle of Pines, where the prisoners have the freedom of the island and can be joined by their relatives. Evangelina with her little sister Carmen followed her father to the island. It was there where she met the brute Berriz. She tells her painful story very delicately:—

One day my sister and I went out for a walk along the shore of the island. We saw five or six men coming on horseback. They were soldiers. The one who seemed to be the chief among them, from the clothes he wore, stopped his horse a little and looked at me. My sister and I were afraid, and we hurried home.

The next time I went out again we met the same man. Again he stopped his horse, and again I was afraid. From that day I could never go out but that this man followed me. It was Jose Berriz, the Military Governor of the island. He tried to speak to me many times, but I was always afraid and did not listen. He was a little yellow man with green eyes, green like the tide water when it is not clean and when the sun shines on it. He had a wife and children in Spain.

One day the soldiers came to our house and took my father away. My father had done nothing that he should be arrested, and we were very much afraid. We did not know what they were going to do with him. They would not let him speak, and they would not answer us when we spoke to them. I took my sister and went up to the Governor and asked him to tell me what they were going to do to my father. He was very kind. He made me to sit down, and he told me to have no fear, that my father should come to no harm, and that in a few days I should come again, and he would tell me that my father was free. I went again in a few days, when he did not tell me that my father was free. He told me that he would set him free if I wished it.

I cannot write all that he said to me. I went home and I cried all night, but I did not go again to the Governor's house to ask for my father's freedom.

One night when she was alone in the house, Berriz came and knocked at the door. She lay still terrified and did not move. He went away. Next day she received a warning that the Governor intended to return at night:—

That night there were friends of mine watching the house. The Governor came. He attempted to force his way into the house; I screamed, and my friends rushed out and caught him. Then the soldiers came and we were all arrested.

They took me to the Recojidas (a prison in Havana). The Recojidas is a prison for women. I would rather be dead and in my grave, with the cross at my head and a stone at my feet, than to be for one day in that place again. The day, it was not the day, that made me wish to die.

Her account of her experiences in the public prison, where she was for some time the only white woman amidst the riffraff of the negro prostitutes in gaol, is very vivid and very fearful. The women were huddled together like wild animals in a pen. The roughs from the streets would come and mock them and chaff the unfortunates, blowing their tobacco smoke through the bars, and gloating over the prospect of her execution. Being



in prison, she remarks simply, does not make one feel like being good:—

But the day I could get through somehow. I was angry sometimes, and that helped me to live; but at night, when everything was still and I was shut up in that pen, with those awful women, something used to rise up in my throat and choke me, and I had to say my prayers over and over again to keep from tearing my throat open.

At last Mrs. Lee, the American Consul's wife, came to see her:—

She could not speak Spanish to me, and I could not speak English to her, but we held each other by the hands, and after that my throat did not feel so tight at night.

improbable, the United States should be involved in war with Spain, this result will probably be due more to the story of Evangelina Cisneros than to all the unnumbered tragedies of a smaller nature which found no chronicler. When every one was cursing the butchers of the Antilles, it occurred to Mr. Hearst, or to some of the staff imbued with his spirit, that it would be a thousand pities if this widespread indignation were to be allowed to evaporate in execration. He set to work to get up a memorial to the Queen of Spain, pleading for the release of the Cuban heroine. The idea, once mooted, was taken up with vigour. All the leading women in America signed



MISS CISNEROS BEFORE AND AFTER THIRTEEN MONTHS' INCARCERATION.

After this her lot was not so hideously intolerable. Another white woman was imprisoned in the same cell, and she learnt to sympathise even with the poor degraded creatures who surrounded her:—

I used to write letters for some of the women in the prison; most of them could not read and write. I did not like any of those women at first, and I never could bear to hear them talk, but when I had written the letters for them I began to feel a little different. Every one of them had some one that she loved and prayed for.

### III.—THE PETITION TO THE QUEEN.

The story of Miss Cisneros, eloquently told in the columns of the newspaper press of America, naturally excited widespread sympathy. Nothing that the Spaniards had done, not even the merciless massacres of Weyler, did so much to inflame the popular indignation. If, as seems not

it, beginning with the President's mother, whose example was followed by most of the wives of the Ministers and all the women who took an intelligent interest in public affairs. Day after day the *Journal* published long lists of the names of the foremost citizens, and when at last the memorial was ready for presentation there were fifteen thousand names in that roll call of honour. There was lacking hardly one of the women who had distinguished themselves in any branch of public service, or who were the mothers, wives, or sisters of any distinguished American public man.

But Mr. Hearst was not satisfied with merely organising the protest of American womanhood. His ambition crossed the Atlantic, and he directed his representative in London, Mr. Murphy, to make the *Journal* offices in 80, Fleet Street, E.C., the centre of an organisation for

collecting the signatures of the representative British women to the following memorial:—

HUMBLE MEMORIAL.

*Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen Regent of Spain.*

We, the undersigned Englishwomen, humbly petition Your Majesty on behalf of

EVANGELINA CISNEROS,

upon whom we learn that sentence of twenty years' penal servitude may be passed by Your Majesty's General in Cuba.

We would add our prayers to those which have already reached you that you will graciously exercise your royal power to prevent this sentence from being confirmed.

We would recall to Your Majesty's mind the extreme youth and inexperience of this unhappy girl.

We would venture to remind Your Majesty that such a sentence carried out on a young lady of culture and refinement means her utter ruin, physically, socially, and morally. We do not believe that Your Majesty's clemency will be misplaced in saving this girl only eighteen years of age from such a fate.

We ask you, Gracious Lady, to consider favourably our petition, which is entirely unbiassed by any political considerations.

And your petitioners will ever pray, etc.

It was not desired to obtain signatures in great numbers, but rather to obtain the names of those who were connected in an official capacity with religious and philanthropic societies. Although the number of the names appended to this memorial did not exceed two hundred, they represent organisations which have a total membership of more than two hundred thousand. The Duchess of Westminster, Lady Henry Somerset, Lady Rothschild, the Countess of Carlisle and others, took the keenest interest in the memorial. Lady Henry Somerset's signature was the first affixed to it. Mrs. Chant's the last. The memorial was a very elaborate affair, three feet long by two feet wide, illuminated in gold, silver, blue and orange, on the thickest vellum, with lettering in English church text. It was sent to our ambassador

at Madrid, but was returned in order that it might be forwarded in due course by the Spanish Ambassador in London. Mrs. Ormiston Chant and Marie Corelli—a curious combination—seem to have divided between them the task of rousing public opinion on the subject. Mrs. Chant especially impressed the *Journal's* representative with the energy, industry and skill with which she co-operated with him in securing this expression of British opinion on behalf of the imprisoned girl. The petition was notable as being the first time in which

English women ever memorialised a foreign potentate as women. There have been memorials before signed by both men and women, but this was the first exclusive female memorial—an appeal by women to a woman on behalf of a woman.

The restless energy of the *Journal* next approached the Pope, and succeeded in securing from his Holiness an expression of sympathy with the imprisoned girl. The Queen of Spain received the memorial, and was understood to have expressed herself as being desirous that no harm should come to Evangelina. She suggested her removal to a convent. To undo the prison bars and let the captive go free was an exercise of the royal prerogative which her Majesty or her Majesty's advisers did not feel was justified under the circumstances.

Days passed, weeks rolled by, and still Evangelina remained in gaol, herded with coloured prostitutes, exposed daily to the taunts and menaces of the vile creatures who daily gloated over the prospect of seeing the fair young creature taken out and shot, a fate which has befallen many another Cuban who had given much less cause for offence to the Spanish tyrant. Then Mr. Hearst lost patience. The American memorial had failed, the English memorial had failed, the Pope's benevolent desires were equally inoperative. He determined that something must be



KARL DECKER.



done. He therefore told off a young married man, on his staff, of the name of Karl Decker, and instructed him to go to Havana and liberate Miss Cisneros. Decker had *carte blanche* as to the means which he was to employ, and the unlimited money with which he had to execute orders.

#### IV.—THE RESCUE.

How he executed his instructions, and how he snatched Evangelina Cisneros from the dungeon of her gaoler in the very midst of a city crowded with Spanish troops, and conveyed her safely to New York, must be told in his own language, into which I have interwoven the account given by Miss Cisneros herself.

I came here three weeks ago, having been told by the editor of the *Journal* to go to Cuba and rescue from her prison Miss Cisneros, the niece of the former President of the Cuban Republic, a tenderly reared girl, descended from one of the best families in the island, and herself a martyr to the unsatisfied desires of a beast in Spanish uniform.

I arrived at Cienfuegos late in September, telegraphed to a known and tried man in Santiago de Cuba to meet me in Havana, and then went to Santa Clara, where I picked up a second man, known to be as gritty as Sahara, and then proceeded to Havana. Here I remained in almost absolute concealment, so as to avoid the spies that dog one's steps wherever one may go and make impossible any clever work of this kind. Both the men who accompanied me, Joseph Hernandon and Harrison Mallory, pursued the same course, and remained quiet until all plans had been completed.

The fact that Miss Cisneros was *incomunicado* made the attempt seem at first beyond the possibility of success, but we finally, through Hernandon, who was born on the island and speaks Spanish like a native, succeeded in sending a note to her through an old negress, who called upon one of her friends in the prison.

#### A NOTE TO THE PRISONER.

A centen got this note through two hands to Miss Cisneros, and three centens later got to her a package of drugged sweets. Having established communication with her, we began work without losing a day.

The rest of the escape has already been told, and the *Journal* has kept its word to the one hundred and fifty thousand women of America who had urged the poor girl's liberation.

The Casa de Recojidas is located in the lowest quarters of Havana, and is surrounded by a huddle of squalid huts occupied by negroes and Chinamen and reeking to heaven by day and night. A single alley, perhaps twenty feet in length, zigzags around two sides of the building, opening off in front of the main entrance.

Compostela Street runs along the rear of the building north and south, and from this leads off westwardly Sigua Street, by which dignified name is known the alley running along the south side of Recojidas. Turning at right angles to the north, the alley tipsily forgets its name and loses record on the map of Havana. At the north end of the building and just in front of the big door of the prison the filthy lane right angles again, becomes O'Farrill Street and strikes straight forward, as though anxious to leave the gaol as soon as possible. It ends at Egido Street, opposite the Havana arsenal.

This was the scene of our operations. There are single rows of houses in the alley facing the side and front of the gaol, and a double row on both sides of O'Farrill Street.

#### A DIFFICULT PROBLEM.

A dozen times in half as many hours I passed through this crooked alley trying to find the solution of a problem that would not be solved. Recojidas was apparently inaccessible; its huge, thick walls towered far in the air, topped by a high, thick parapet. The only windows to be seen from the alley were about thirty-five feet from the ground, and were protected, as are all windows in Cuba, by massive iron bars.

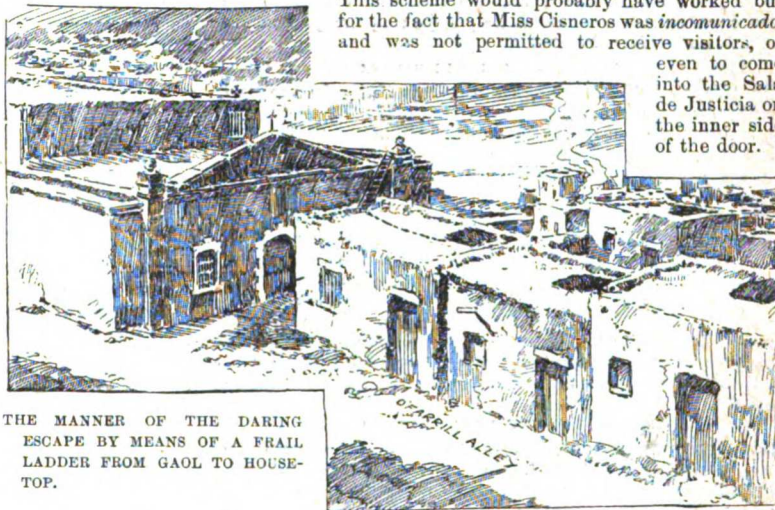
Although not known to any of us at that time, as it was invisible from the street, there was a window opening from the second story on an azotca, or flat roof, over lower rooms in the front of the building. Through this window the escape of Miss Cisneros was finally effected, but it was not until a week after our survey that any suggestion looking to the use of this window was made.

For the first week we scanned and rescanned the outer walls, suggesting a dozen plans, all equally worthless. A daylight attempt was considered, and plans were made to get Miss Cisneros to the barred door opening into a small court just off the main entrance.

Don Jose, the *alcalde*, was then to be lured outside the door, lured further, into a state of temporary unconsciousness, and our end accomplished by a wild dash for liberty.

This scheme would probably have worked but for the fact that Miss Cisneros was *incomunicado*, and was not permitted to receive visitors, or

even to come into the Sala de Justicia on the inner side of the door.



THE MANNER OF THE DARING ESCAPE BY MEANS OF A FRAIL LADDER FROM GAOL TO HOUSE-TOP.

The fact that the Havana arsenal, always under a strong guard, stretched its long front across the end of O'Farrill Street on the other side of Egido Street, and that the barracks of a company of the Orden Publicos was located just back of Recojidas on Compostela Street, made this plan decidedly uncertain as to results. It was abandoned.

As it appeared at this time absolutely impossible to either get into the gaol ourselves or to get Miss Cisneros out, it was considered to have become a case of *untar los manos*, and a sturdy attempt was made to reach some of the guards or keepers with bribes, but nothing was effected. Finally, when it appeared as if the only possible way to secure the escape of the beautiful Cuban would be to dynamite a part of the building, a note was smuggled in to her as a last resort, asking if she could make any suggestion that could help us.

#### MISS CISNEROS'S PLAN.

In answer she sent the following message, in Spanish, of course:—"My plan is the following. To escape by the roof with the aid of a rope, descending by the front of the house at a given hour and signal. For this I require acid, to destroy the bars of the windows, and opium or morphine, so as to set to sleep my companions. The best way to use it is in sweets, and thus I can also set to sleep the vigilantes.

"Three of you come and stand at the corners; a lighted cigar will be the signal of alarm, for which I may have to

delay, and a white handkerchief will be the agreed signal by which I can safely descend. I will only bring with me the necessary clothes tied around my waist. This is my plan; let me know if it is convenient."

SHE SENT A PLAN, TOO.

Accompanying this was a plan drawn by herself showing the exact location of the window referred to. It was at the end of a second story apartment running along Sigua Street on the side of the prison, but not extending clear to its front. The azotea, or flat roof, on which it opens was about twenty feet wide, and a high parapet along the front of the building hid this window from sight in the street.

No time was lost in acting on her suggestion. The idea of eating through an iron bar with acid was dismissed, and the question then naturally presented itself as to how the bars of the window could be cut so as to permit her to crawl through. The height of the building also precluded the idea of letting her attempt to come down by herself. Her plan was to use the rope on the flag-staff.

Consequently it became absolutely necessary for us to gain access to the azotea if we were to succeed. To do this, it became immediately apparent, would necessitate the use of a house in the crooked little alley running around the gaol. By the rarest good fortune I found on my next visit to the vicinity a vacant house immediately adjoining the gaol on the north side of O'Farrill Street.

MORE FAMOUS THAN THE PALACE.

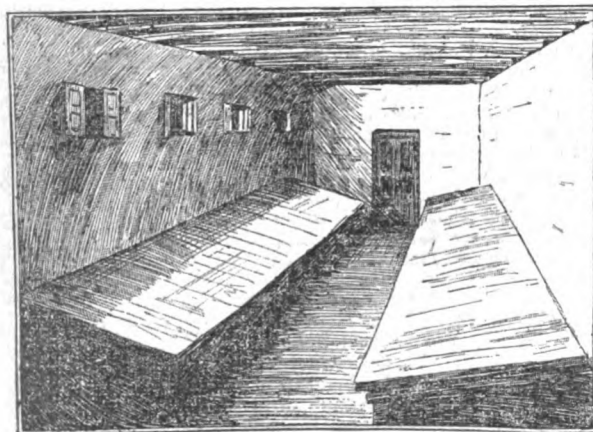
By this time No. 1, O'Farrill Street is better known and more famous in Havana than the palace itself. By the end of the next day the house was in our possession. As La Lucha naively remarks to-day:—"The lessees could find no one to become responsible for them, so paid two months in advance."

Our gold pieces made this O'Farrill palace ours for the space of two months should we care to occupy it that long. Next day the deal was closed. A colored Habanero was sent to the house to whitewash, and besides the lime and brush he carried a light ladder about twelve feet long. The possession of this ladder was all that brought him on the scene. When he went away in the evening he forgot it and it remained in the house.

Last Tuesday night we went into the squalid little den at No. 1, fully prepared, as we believed, for all possible contingencies.

HOUSEHOLD NEXT DOOR ALARMED.

Having the key, I went first and reached and entered the house without being noticed. Hernandon and Mallory followed about an hour later, but were so unfortunate as to find the door of No. 3, the adjoining house, standing open, with two of the occupants gaping idly at the moon, waiting for the arrival of the last of their household. As our two men passed



INTERIOR OF RECOJIDAS PRISON, WHERE MISS CISNEROS WAS INCARCERATED.

them and disappeared into the house they became very much alarmed, seeming to imagine the visit of the strange men to the house next door foreboded some pending calamity to themselves.

Although it was now 12.30, the occupants of No. 3 remained awake, busying themselves at first with barricading themselves in. Finally, however, the tardy member of that household arrived and with much noise and clamor they barred themselves in and went to bed.

It was fully 1.30 o'clock before the noises of the neighbourhood quieted down and the evil place fell into a semblance of repose. At this time the moon was high in the heavens, and as bright as the midday sun. Down towards the corner of the front of the Recojidas a large gas-lighted bracket against the side of one of the houses made visible the smallest object in the dirty thoroughfare.

PERILOUS TRIP.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, however, we mounted the roof and proceeded to business. The front of Recojidas lay at right angles to our house, but the prison building ran back of our building so that the walls were together. At this point, however, the guard-wall of the Recojidas rose sheer twenty feet above our heads and was protected on the top by a thick sprinkling of broken glass bottles.

This guard-wall extended out from the front of our wall to a point ten or twelve feet distant, where it joined the azotea. To reach this latter point, therefore, it was necessary to throw the ladder diagonally across the right angle separating our roof from the azotea. This was the most ticklish part of the business, as the ladder was frail and thrillingly short.

Finally the ladder was in position and the trip across began. No man engaged in that enterprise that night will ever forget that twelve foot walk across that sagging, decrepit ladder. At one time it swayed from the wall. Hernandon was only saved from a terrible fall by the promptness with which the two men at the ends of the ladder acted.

As it was, a large piece of the weak cornice on which the ladder was resting went clattering down into the street, waking the alcalde, who came hastily to the door. By this time the ladder had been withdrawn. Two men were left on the azotea of the gaol, while the third was left on the roof of the house to handle our drawbridge and guard our retreat.

GAOLER'S NARROW ESCAPE.

A great gap opened in the face of the massive building a old Don Jose looked out into the quiet street. He stood there for a few minutes with an absolutely unnecessary candle in his hand staring out at the moon and apparently greatly pleased with the beautiful aspect of the soft Cuban night. Then, apparently convinced that all was safe, he turned and passed back into Recojidas, and thus passed unharmed through the most dangerous moment of his life, for every second that he remained in the street was a second fraught with death.

Three forty-four calibre revolvers covered him, and his discovery of our position on the roof would have called for his immediate execution. Time was then allowed for the natural quiet to drift back upon the scene, and when finally everything had become normal the work of getting the *Journal's* protégée out of her loathsome dungeon was begun.

We crept softly across the roof to the window she had indicated. As we reached it we saw her standing before it. She was dressed in a dark-coloured dress, and not easily seen in the gloom inside. She gave one glad little cry and clasped our hands through the bars, calling upon us to liberate her at once. She had been standing there for over two hours and a half, but her patience never deserted her, and she knew that aid was coming as she could see us on the roof of No. 1.

Bidding her be quiet, we started at work cutting through the iron bar between her and liberty. We selected the third bar on the left side of the window, and began cutting it near the bottom. Our progress was slow and wearisome, and finally, after an hour's work, we found that we had only cut part of the way through. It was impossible to use the saw quickly, as the bars were not set firmly in the frame, and



rattled and rang like a fire alarm every time the saw passed across the iron.

#### FIRST NIGHT TOO SHORT.

At last a stir in the room she had quitted warned Miss Cisneros that it was best for her to retire again; so, leaving us, she slipped a sheet about her and glided quickly back to her bed at the far end of the dormitory. Before going she begged us to return the following night and complete our work. She was quickly assured we would be on hand again, and she was contented.

#### HOW THE CAPTIVE FELT.

I here interrupt Mr. Decker's narrative in order to let the girl describe what passed inside the gaol.

From the moment she got the letter telling her of the plot to rescue her she became quite calm and self-possessed:—

I was not afraid or excited, or glad, or sorry any more. I just thought and thought and thought. My father has a saying, "Courage is King." I kept saying that over and over to myself, and then I began to draw a plan of the prison and of the window. I sent the letter out that same afternoon.

Miss Cisneros naturally felt an agony of suspense while Decker was filing through the bars. "The saw made a terrible noise." But the laudanum she had obtained from the doctor made the women sleep sound. But when one of them stirred and spoke, Evangelina went back to her bed:—

About ten minutes, I think it could not have been longer, I was fast asleep. I do not see how I could sleep, but I know that I did. In the morning, when I awoke, I was so weak that I could scarcely lift my hand. All that day I sat in the cell and wondered when some one would speak about that bar in the window. I do not see how it was that no one noticed that it was partly sawed through.

I now resume Mr. Decker's story:—

We were bitterly disappointed at our failure. I had selected Tuesday night in view of the fact that the next day afforded an opportunity to catch the steamer to Key West, where we could send a man with the full story of the night's occurrence, as it was well known that no detailed account of the escape could be cabled from Havana.

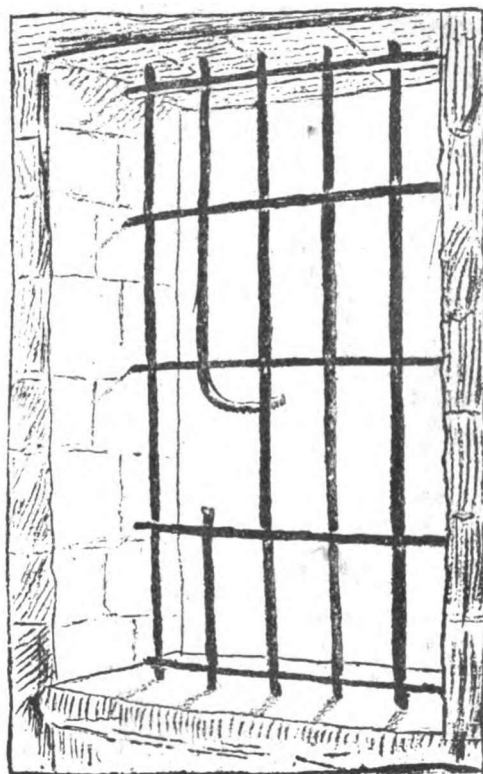
We trusted to luck, however, to stand by us, hoping only that our anxious neighbours in No. 3 would not give the alarm, and that the cut bar would remain undiscovered. We had no means of knowing the next day whether or not our attempt of the night before had been discovered, but proceeded on the assumption that it had not, and so determined to carry out our plans to the letter.

A lot of cheap second-hand furniture was purchased in one of the outlying suburbs and was placed in our house, and that night when we went there we were surrounded by our own household lares and penates. A huge porron decorated the tinujero, flanked on either side by a bottle of jenever and a big bundle of brevas. Our sideboard was set with plates and other crockery, and a chest of drawers, a folding table and a pair of canvas folding cots had been sent in.

We dragged out the tables and set forth candles until it gleamed like a banquet board. Then we threw open the window so that the neighbours might look upon the newcomers in the neighbourhood and become acquainted with them, and, finally, fell into a game of poker around the table that came near destroying all our strongly cemented friendship.

#### THE GUARDS LOOKED IN.

Until 11 o'clock the game went on. A brace of guards in their striking blue and red uniforms, lounged up to the windows to note whether we played for wind or centens, and, finding the game as innocent as a day in May, wandered off with their swords clanking about their heels. At 11 o'clock we shut the window and barred out the soft, bright moonlight that flooded the room with its silvery glory, and then turned in for a couple of hours' patient waiting.



THE BARRED WINDOW THROUGH WHICH MISS CISNEROS ESCAPED.

It was not easy work, as the stone floor we lay upon was as hard as the heart of Weyler and twice as cold. The bundle of brevas went up in smoke as we lay there talking in whispers, and finally the time for action arrived. The inmates of No. 3 were again awake, and, far from being impressed by our household furniture, seemed to fear us even more than the night before. It was dread of the strangers in the alley that kept them quiet and made Miss Cisneros's release possible.

They sat up talking this night during the entire time we were working on the roof, and were still sputtering Spanish when we left them. This time the fairies seemed to be working with us, and everything moved as smoothly as clockwork. The ladder was raised to the roof without a sound, and as we pattered about in our stocking feet a spell of enchantment seemed to fall upon the city. Far off in the haze of moonlight a jangling chime of bells seemed changed by some magic into sweetest music, and the ugly tile roofs and queer bits of old Moorish architecture, jutting angularly here and there, seemed transformed by some magician's touch into palaces.

#### AGAIN ON THE FRAIL LADDER.

Again the light, frail ladder was thrown across from the roof of the azotea. The trying and perilous journey was made as quickly as possible. The ladder was withdrawn and we were again in front of the window behind which Miss Cisneros was imprisoned.

This time there was no delay. Our outfit consisted of a pair of Stilson wrenches, and, putting one above and one below the cut made the night before, we wrenched the bar asunder with one snap. In a second I had caught the broken bar and had pulled it out enough for a purchase, and then, lipping my knee under, I drew it up till it was horizontal with the roof. I then stooped, slipped the bar across my shoulder, and, grasping the crossbar above, straightened myself, bringing the bar far up in the air. A second later I had twisted myself into a





ESCAPING OVER THE ROOF.

huge V above the crossbar, and, reaching down, caught Miss Cisneros by the shoulders and pulled her through the opening.

Could the women of the United States have seen the smile on that poor girl's face as she realised that at last, after fifteen months of prison life, she was at liberty, they would have felt a happiness as great almost as hers. That one fleeting smile of ineffable happiness was reward enough for both of us there at the window for all our work and risk.

To Miss Cisneros inside the gaol that day seemed an eternity. When night came she again put laudanum in the coffee, and then lay down and pretended to sleep:—

When all was well I got up and put on my dress and stood at the window again, and counted again, and prayed again. The moon was shining very bright; oh! so big and round and white; there were three clouds near the moon, and one of them was shaped like a mountain, and I played to myself that I would climb up that mountain, and I began in my mind to walk up the jagged edges of the cliffs.

It was in some way like a dream, and she was not surprised when the man came back and began to saw at the bar. But when the bar broke, she had to put her hand over her mouth to prevent herself screaming for joy.

When he lifted her he wanted to carry her across the ladder. "I ran across myself. I felt as if I could run miles."

Mr. Decker says:—

To get our little heroine safely away was now the question. The trip across the creaking, swaying ladder was made by Miss Cisneros with the grace and ease of a frightened fawn. The astute detectives who found a knotted rope on the roof

stated that the ends had been held by two men on either roof, affording Miss Cisneros a hand-rail to guide her across.

Nothing of the sort was done. The knotted rope was to be used in case of emergency, in case our return to the roof of No. 1 should be cut off, forcing us to descend from some other part of the building. Miss Cisneros needed no hand-rail in her state of joy and exhilaration.

#### NO DELAY IN MAKING OFF.

No time was lost in getting away from the building. We quickly made our way downstairs, donned our shoes and made off. The neighbours heard the clang of the heavy doors closing, then the sharp, quick rattle of a carriage dashing recklessly off over the cobbles, and then quiet fell upon the neighbourhood of the Recojidas. The beautiful girl prisoner was at liberty and would never again feel the suffocation of the crowding walls.

#### V.—THE ESCAPE FROM CUBA.

When it was known in Havana that the bird had flown the authorities were frantic. They interrogated everybody, searched everywhere, made domiciliary visits in almost every conceivable dwelling-house, but always in vain. It was reported that she had escaped in a small boat, and at once the swiftest cruiser in the port, with all available steamers, were commissioned to steam in hot haste to overtake her before she reached the Florida coast.

The story of her escape is best told in her own words. Miss Cisneros says:—

There was a carriage waiting. We jumped into the carriage, and the horses' feet went clip clap, clip clap, clip clap down the street. I don't think any of us spoke.

Reaching a friend's house, she alighted and found shelter. When she slept, she always found herself climbing up the sides of the steep mountain, with the round moon staring down at her like a sick face. Three days she remained in hiding. Her hair was cut off; she was dressed like a boy, and instructed in the art of walking like a man. "I felt like a little nothing, I was so small, and my feet looked so big, and I did not like it."

At five o'clock on the third day she was driven in a carriage down to the wharf with the two men, Decker and the Cuban, who helped her to escape. Entering a little boat, they were rowed out to the American steamer *Seneca*. "If it had not been for the cigar I should have laughed with happiness." When she reached the deck, she was shown into a little cabin. She went in and crawled under the lowest berth and lay there "like a naughty little boy who is going to get a whipping and was hiding." All at once the door opened and a man entered. She did not breathe. The man struck a match. "It is all over," she thought, "they have caught me." And she resolved to jump overboard and end it all. But it was only the purser of the steamer to tell her they were an hour out from Havana, and that she was free.

"Then I became very, very sick. If it was the escape, or the sea, or perhaps the cigar, I don't know."

What a charming human girl she is!

Next day she was well and her heart sang all the way, and she had only one regret:—

I hate to think of the little woman who wanted to breathe sea air again. I feel guilty to be here, free and happy, and cared for. I wish I could have brought her with me.

And my father—my poor father—how I wish I could have seen him when he heard of my escape.

I do not think he will believe it. Good news is hard to believe in Cuba. I am so grateful for my release, and to the friends who have helped me that I cannot speak of it. I have no words.

She had a false passport, secured in the name of Juan Sole, and no one suspected her identity, nor did any one in Cuba know where she had gone until her arrival was telegraphed from New York.

As for Decker, her rescuer, he was of course extremely suspected owing to the fact that the *New York Journal*, whose representative he was, was known to be the first that published the news of her escape. Nothing, however, could be proved, and he had the audacity to leave the island on board a Spanish steamer, nor was it known until he arrived at New York that the Spaniards had any idea that they had actually conveyed the man for whom they were searching everywhere, under the Spanish flag, in a Spanish ship, to safety in American waters.

It is not necessary here to continue the narrative any further beyond saying that no event has excited as much interest and enthusiasm in the United States for many a long day. Mr. Hearst was inundated with telegrams from all parts of the Union, eulogising the service which he had rendered to humanity. Even Mr. Sherman, the Secretary of State, expressed his sympathy with the *Journal's* enterprise. Mr. Gage, the Secretary of the Treasury, telegraphed his emphatic approval of what the *Journal* had done, while senators and governors vied

with each other in applauding the enterprise and philanthropy of the newspaper. Nor was it only from the United States that he received this unstinted applause. The Pope himself was said to have expressed his gratification at so happy an escape from a hopeless *impasse*, while our own Bishop of London telegraphed to Mr. Hearst in enthusiastic terms.

Similar telegrams, more or less in the same strain, were received from the Duke of Westminster, Lady Rothschild, Lady Henry Somerset, and others. Miss Cisneros, since her arrival in New York, became the heroine of the Continent, and at a great reception held in Madison Square Garden an immense concourse of people, estimated at two hundred thousand, assembled to cheer the brave young girl and her gallant rescuer.

Such is the story that our press has so strangely, or, possibly inadvertently, conspired to suppress. It is full of every element of human interest. Whether it is the description of Mr. Hearst, the millionaire journalist, or of Karl Decker the reporter, to whom the breaking of a Spanish gaol was a mere matter of journalistic assignment in the day's work of a modern newspaper man, or of the central figure of all—the romantic, beautiful Evangelina herself—could there be any narrative more full of good copy?

## THE AUSTRALIAN PREMIERS IN ENGLAND.

BY MR. REID, PREMIER OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

MR. REID contributes to the *Australasian Review of Reviews* an article on the experiences of the Colonial Premiers in England at the Jubilee:—

### OUR WELCOME.

Only when I saw the mass of letters and invitations which awaited me at Dover, did I realise fully the nature of the ordeal through which I should have to pass. The programme of national hospitality prepared for the travelling Premiers surpassed all precedents, even in the entertainment of crowned heads.

Looking back upon those wonderful days and nights, upon the stately procession of magnificent banquets—the dazzling beauty of the London drawing rooms—the bewildering race through breakfast, luncheon, afternoon and evening receptions, varied by changing visits to the country, and crowned by the gracious and repeated hospitalities of the Queen and the Prince of Wales, I can only indulge in one feeling beside that of gratitude for so much kindness, a feeling of thankfulness we all survived, and that, so far as I know, we left upon our generous entertainers no unkind or disagreeable impressions.

### THE BRITAIN OF THE PAST.

The diverse and unsympathetic races inhabiting the British Isles, which inexorable conditions of contiguity and conquest have consolidated, slowly and painfully, until they have become one people, have passed through many phases of shame and of glory. Their path through the centuries has been red with blood, and they have laid violent hands upon the fairest portions of the earth. The triumph of military and naval prowess abroad was accompanied, before the present reign, by a selfish and tyrannical system of government at home. Whilst the soldiers and sailors of Britain performed prodigies of valour abroad, the statesmen of Britain perpetrated prodigies of meanness and chicanery at home. Such was the dark, tempestuous condition of the British Empire within the memory of living Englishmen.

### THE NEW POLICY.

The present reign is the most glorious in our history, because it has witnessed a wonderful transformation in the

power and policy of Great Britain. The ceaseless efforts of silly rulers to assert personal power have disappeared. Ministers of State have become trustees for the whole people. The sovereign, divested of personal responsibility, has become a centre of stability for the constitution, and of reverence to the whole people.

The grand result of the unaided struggle of Great Britain against the world, in trade, shipping, and finance, is simply this, that the enterprise, skill, and industry of her business community have, under Free Trade conditions, won for England at the close of the nineteenth century a position of world-wide supremacy, greater, and far more wonderful, than the glories of her contests by land or sea have ever been.

### WHAT THE PREMIERS DID.

I was in time for the first great function, namely, the Jubilee Banquet of the Imperial Institute, the chair being occupied by the Prince of Wales. I knew, as all men do, about the genial courtesy of the Prince, but I confess that I was scarcely prepared to find him so good a speaker. I may say here, that the fame won for his charming qualities is thoroughly deserved; but he is a much abler man than many in the colonies can have any notion of.

On Sunday morning we attended, with the Speaker and Members of the House of Commons, the Thanksgiving Service at St. Margaret's Church, the sermon being preached by Dean Farrar. The address was a masterpiece of Christian eloquence, and contained the essence of many sermons. I deeply regret that I was unable to accept an invitation from Dr. Farrar to visit Canterbury, as I should have been delighted to make his acquaintance.

### LONDON.

I did not take in a just impression of London for two or three days. Its greatness does not arise from one or two conspicuous sights as in most places, but from so many different attributes not to be mastered at once. But on